

The Last Battle

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Summary: But finally a decision had been made, a decision that would either stop the endless fighting, or destroy ourselves. The choice had been made and plans were set. The UNSC would invade the Brute home world. Reviews welcome.

1. The Invasion

Well here goes. I don't own Halo, Microsoft does. Sorted. Got the idea for this a while ago and finally decided to put pen to paper so to speak. By the way, this is FOR FUN. So if any burners out there want to have a go at me for this like they already have with my other stuff then I don't care but I do think you need to get a life and write some of your own work before you rip mine to shreds.

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The Invasion

This was it, he thought to himself. The top Brass had finally made the decision, though to be honest, deep inside him he had to agree there were few other options. This War had seen the loss of too many heroes, this prolonged War of attrition.

'Three yearsâ€¦' He mumbled to himself. His train of thought started again, it had been three years since the War should have ended, the Prophets all dead, the Covenant broken, the Elites had gone home and the Halo crisis had been resolved by Commander-in-chief John 117. Ironic, he mused, ironic that it takes saving the Galaxy and your own life to be moved up the ranks.

He dragged himself to a standing position groggily and moved towards the Bathroomâ€¦or corner as he called it. Titan Class Battleships may have been an awe-inspiring sight, but it had living quarters that were not to be envied. But living conditions weren't too important when the ship you were on had to tangle with delivering two thousand soldiers to a battlefield. He stepped up to the mirror in his

'corner'. Private First Class Jack Durham looked back. A mess of brown hair perched on his head, and a now seemingly empty, even he had to admit, blue eyes which had once been full of life. But that was a long time ago.

How had he ended up here? Jack had asked himself so often recently that he knew his own response off by heart. The War should have ended, it should have stopped. But it didn't. The Brutes, those damned monstersâ€|they didn't know when to stop, nothing was controlling them now, again and again they attacked, and the endless skirmishes were just prolonging the bloodshed. Command had talked, argued and deliberated for months, all the while more lives were lost. But finally a decision had been made, a decision that would either stop the endless fighting, or destroy ourselves. The choice had been made and plans were set. The UNSC would invade the Brute home world. The planned invasion would be the largest military operation in the history of our Planet. Brash decision or not, the entire military body had been committed to the operation. Over four million combat personnel would touch down on the rock the Brutes called home. The Fleet, the whole Fleet had been called togetherâ€|the whole Fleet would be needed if there was any hope of even beginning this Invasion.

Jack sighed; he was one, one in over four million. One soldier, one stat on a computer, chalking up casualties, losses and the wounded there were guaranteed to be. He wondered how many other men and women were following the same chain of thought as him.

Suddenly a siren blared in the corridor outside his quarters. Hurried footsteps clattered past his door as all along the corridor outside other Marines, other men and women just like him ran to the hangars to join their units. Wellâ€|maybe not all of them were like him, Jack was an ODS. He, and many others, had the good fortune of paving the way for the rest of the Invasion. He walked over to the wall by the door and lifted his armour from the wall; he fixed it over his standard-issue bodysuit, then reached up for his helmet from a shelf above him. He pulled it down over his head and fixed it onto the neck of his armour. Stepping back from the shelf Jack checked the armour was airtight and made sure the oxygen tanks worked. Satisfied Jack walked to the door, slinging his battle rifle over his shoulder as he did, and set off for the drop pods.

2. Preparation

Ok if it won't take up too much time or bore you I'd like to say that I've held up again on the action, but it wouldn't make a lot of sense if I threw a load of it in, so instead this is building up some character and setting the scene, thanks for being so patient. And I'd like to add a thank you for the review from fatdude, whose review has driven me to make this as good as his expectations of it are. Hope you like it dude, it will get more action I promise -
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Preparation

Jack rounded a corner quickly and almost bowled into a group of marines. After raising a hand apologetically he carried on. As the

marines moved off again Jack took a second to look at them, they looked fresh out of boot camp. He looked down at the ground shaking his head slowly 'is this what the UNSC had dragged in? Raw recruits to fill our numbers? Jack broke himself from his thoughts and continued to drop station Alpha. The station which his Platoon, the 506th 'Bombshells' were to be dropped from.

As he entered the room the atmosphere had taken a different turn, the men and women from his unit were all laughing and talking calmly. Jack knew it was all a front, but why spoil the last few moments before we were thrust into battle. He stepped away from the crowd, leant against a nearby wall and closed his eyes, taking in the lightened mood around him.

'Hello sailor 'goin' my way?' Jack opened his eyes and looked for the source of the voice. He looked to his left and saw another ODS from his unit. Jack removed his helmet and turned to the person beside him.

'Hello Karen.' Jack answered.

'How'd you guess?' She asked playfully removing her helmet. A mop of chestnut hair fell to her shoulders. Her green eyes showed the innocence Jack had lost.

'Call it a hunch, I'm not hit on by most of the others y'know?'

'Fair enough, She replied. Her smile disappeared almost instantly, have you been told anything yet?...about our orders or anything?'

'No.' Jack replied flatly. Karen looked more nervous now. There was a sudden bellowing emanating from the other end of the room, all the ODS's lined up against the wall to attention.

'Officer on deck!' someone cried. Jack turned his head to the doorway and spotted the Sergeant walk through. He was tough, a lot tougher than most, but no-one complained, he had gotten us through some intense situations before and most of the Platoon trusted him. He'd made quite the reputation for himself recently, while they, his Platoon, were on leave, he had been in control of the Scout Frigate 'Anvil'. On patrol they ran into a Brute combat craft, under the Sergeants supervision the Frigate had successfully performed a boarding Op. and had detonated the Brutes ship. He had earned himself the name 'Hammer' among the troops. Jack couldn't complain. It was what people needed, maybe not a Hero, but someone to put faith in.

'Alright!, The Sergeant shouted, Command has seen fit to grace us with a mission of the utmost importance.!' He continued walking down the room.

'Apparently there's a problem unforeseen until now, he continued, Command has reported several Gun Stations are placed between us, and our target, and apparently, they work just like ours, which has led Command to believe that they ARE ours. According to reports several of our Gun Platforms were reported missing during the second Covenant attack on Earth, we don't know how they did it, but they've wound up here, against us. So Command is deploying us, along with several

other ODSST Platoons to disable three key Stations. We will be dropped with a unit of the 234th, he paused, and we'll just see how things go from there. You get me Marines!'

'Sir yes Sir!' The Platoon cried in unison.

'Alright, ETA two minutes, that's when this scrapheap, the so called 'Themis' moves into position, so get ready!'

Jack turned away and put his helmet on again, then satisfied it worked turned back to Karen, who seemed to be having trouble with hers.

'Need a hand?' He spoke.

'No, no I got it thanks.' She replied. She placed the helmet over her head and started fiddling with the latches attaching the helmet to her armour. Jack stopped her and proceeded to secure the helmet in place himself. Jack and Karen stopped. They gazed at each other for a moment.

There was a sudden explosion and the resulting shockwave caused the ship to shudder dangerously.

'Ok Marines, time to go!' The Sergeant cried.

Jack smiled at Karen apologetically through his helmet visor and placed a hand on her shoulder, then turned away and stepped into his drop pod. He leant against the wall of the pod and fixed himself in, then turned his head to a small window in the pod, outside he saw the UNSC fleet take up positions, the combat craft began to open fire on the Gun Stations and the Titan carriers, including the Themis, began to move towards the closest Stations. Jack heard the Sergeant shout over the intercom.

'Our target is Station Razor; we touch down on the southern branch of the Platform, regroup on landing and move towards the main airlock!'

Jack breathed in, then out and laid his head back calmly, this was itâ€|this was it.

3. Gun Station Razor

Well here's the third chapter for anyone whos been reading, I promised action and I think this classes as it. At fatdudes request I've granted him a small cameo role. His names an anagram but it shouldn't be that hard to spot. Anyway thanks for reading so far whoever's out there.

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The Last Battle

Gun Station Razor

There was a sudden hiss as the latches fixing the pod in its bay detached, following that the pod lurched downwards as the thrusters on top fired. The pod dropped from the bay like a rocket. Jack calmly

opened his eyes and looked out the small window, he could see all along the ship pods were launching, he then looked down and saw the previously UNSC controlled Mac Gun below. A beeping started in the pod; Jack readied himself for landing, in his mind he sounded of the seconds.

Three

Two

One

The bottom of the pod swung open and Jack found himself slowly falling through it, he floated down towards the Station below him, looking around he saw other ODST's from his Platoon around him. Jack turned his attention to the Station as he had suddenly become aware of the blaring sound of gunfire. A large group of Brutes had taken up defensive positions around the main airlock, volleys of needles and bullets from what used to be their own 50 cal. Machine guns flew past him. All around Jack he saw men and women shudder with the impact of the gunfire and glide lifelessly away through space. Jack pulled his battle rifle from his shoulder and clicked an ammo cartridge into place, he then drew back the loader and slammed it forward and felt the click of bullets slipping into the firing chamber. He raised the gun, feeling the stock fit into his shoulder satisfyingly. He lowered his head and aimed down the scope. He let his finger touch the trigger as he adjusted the sight. He pushed down on the trigger.

Moments later the landing had turned into a full scale fire fight. Enough ODST's, along with Jack, had secured a portion of the platform and were moving towards the fortified airlock. Bodies dropped to the ground both Human and Brute alike. Above him Jack saw the 'Themis' pull out of firing range overhead. Someone ran up to Jack and tapped a hand on his shoulder; Jack turned round and found himself face to face with an ODST carrying a Radiopack.

'Where's the CO?' The Radio Op. said sounding exhausted. Jack was about to answer when a volley of bullets slammed into a wall behind them, two more men fell to the ground in a heap. Jack grabbed the shoulder of the Radio Op. and thrust him against the wall beside Jack himself.

'Are you trying to get yourself killed?!' Jack cried over the continual barrage.

'We all will if I don't find the Sergeant!' The man retorted.

'What!' Jack shouted.

'One of the combat frigates, the 'Fudedat', has received permission to make a bombing sweep of the Station; I just received orders that if we're not inside in about five minutes we'll be hit.' The soldier explained. Jack cursed.

'Ok, Jack began, I'll find the Sergeant, you just warn anyone you can find.' The Radio Op. began to move. Jack grabbed his shoulder and pulled him back again.

'What?' The soldier complained.

'Don't get shot!' Jack shouted. The Radio Op. nodded and ran off. Jack leant round the wall he was using as cover; he spotted two Brutes on a raised platform pinning down several soldiers to his left. Taking a deep breath, Jack span out and fired four volleys from his battle rifle, the Brutes fell from the platform, lifeless.

'Good work son!' Jack heard over the intercom in his helmet. He looked round and spotted the Sergeant rallying as many ODS'T's around him as he could.

'Ok! He shouted, this goes down by minutes, and we don't have many left to get inside there so we attack now! Move out Marines!'

'Covering fire!' Someone called. Small groups of ODS'T's had taken up firing positions and began to fire at the Brutes blocking the airlock. The Sergeant gave the order and under cover from the barrage led his soldiers in a charge against the barricade, Jack linked up with the group as they moved past him. The Brutes, who had been taking cover, weren't ready for the sudden strike, they hastily stood up and began firing into the groups midst, all around Jack men and women shuddered and fell with the impact of the enemy fire, or collapsed from taking too many wounding shots. But the momentum of the charge carried and they found themselves inches from the Brutes themselves.

Jack raised his rifle and fired, bullets spitting from the barrel and finding their mark in the chest of a nearby Brute, he then vaulted the barricade and slammed the butt of his gun into the face of another, knocking it to the ground, he then fired several volleys into the Brute as it tried to stand. Jack looked round, the barricade had been smashed, and what Brutes remained opened the airlock and retreated inside. The Sergeant issued a common order to all ODS'T's in range to make their way inside before the 'Fudedat' began its bombing run. Jack followed the Sergeant and the survivors from the 506th and 234th platoons inside. The door hissed shut behind him, Jack flinched as outside the bombing began, and over the intercom the screams started.

4. Hollow Victory

Well here's Chapter 4. Hopefully more to the action-like promises I made in the genre choice. But if not I still try to include some drama in the story. Anyway now my boring bit's done on with the story.

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Hollow Victory

Jack still felt sick inside almost half an hour later, the Platoons had fought their way from the outer hangars and were on the way to linking up and striking at the bridge, where they would shut down the Mac Station for good. The bombing had finished minutes ago, and though the screamingâ€|those screamsâ€|had stopped Jack could still

almost feel the lives of the Brutes—and the humans outside just, end. He snapped from his thoughts to the sound of more gunfire up ahead, the Sergeant was still pressing on ahead followed by the other ODS'T's. Jack took a second to catch his breath before running after them again.

Jack hurled himself at a nearby wall as the bullets sprayed past him into the midst of a group of ODS'T's behind him. The Sergeant was crying out orders which were falling on deaf ears at the moment. Brutes had taken up defensive positions on the opposite side of the room. Jack swore to himself as he leant out for a moment and counted four turrets keeping them pinned down. Two were raised high on a second floor. Two more were perched on raised platforms before them. The sounds of Battle Rifles, Brute Spikers, SMG's, 50 cal. turrets blared in Jack's ears. The shouts and screams around him escalated the sound into a noise he'd never heard in his life.

Jack had had enough; he ejected the empty ammo cartridge and slammed another into its place. He made sure the Rifle was loaded before slinging it over his back. Jack unclipped two Frag Grenades from his belt, he snapped off the pins and taking a deep breath he counted the seconds.

Three

Two

One

Jack dove out from behind the wall and hurled the Grenades, one left and one right, Jack carried with the momentum until he landed behind the wall opposite him. The two Grenades found their mark in the surprised faces of the two Brutes manning the guns on the lower platforms. There was a sudden explosion, then silence. When the smoke cleared the remnants of the Platoon came out from their cover and surveyed the now empty battlefield. What Brutes had survived had fled. The two turrets on the second floor were silent. Brute corpses littered the floor. Jack felt a hand pat his shoulder approvingly.

'Well done son.' The Sergeant spoke.

'I didn't do this for you.' Jack spat harshly.

A sudden cheer went up before the Sergeant could reply. Jack looked up and found the explanation as to why the Brutes on the second floor had abandoned their positions, up on the second floor stood a large group of waving people from the 234th Platoon. The Sergeant said something that sounded like a 'Well done troops' and a 'You got five minutes'

Jack took this brief pause in the battle to gather himself. He walked over to a nearby shattered wall and sat down; he then removed his helmet and breathed in fresh air. He rubbed his eyes, adjusting to the light, then leant back and watched the other ODS'T's. They too removed their helmets and quickly began wandering around looking for friends or family among the Platoon. Jack shook his head sadly, knowing that some wouldn't find who they were looking for. In that moment something dawned on Jack. He stood, carrying his helmet in one hand. He walked into the crowd of soldiers and mentally cursed

himself. He had forgotten about Karen.

Jack hadn't been this worried about...anything in a long time. Jack hadn't felt anything in a long time. But nowâ€¦now things had changed for some reason. And so Jack had found himself running, running and shouting out Karen's name. He didn't care about what was happening. The Station had been taken, the operation was a success and right now the last few Brutes were retreating and holding onto the last hangar. Jack ran for the hangar, along the way picking up fragments of information about what had been going on during the battle from small groups of wounded soldiers scattered round the Station. Apparently the attack had gone well, except for one landing group who had found themselves ambushed and had been forced to surrender. Jack was making for the hangar where he had heard the ODST's were trying to stop the Brutes escaping with their prisoners. Jack rounded a corner and heard the sounds of battle ahead of him.

Jack gazed out the hangar window at the Brute's planet below. He was sat back against a crate in the middle of the hangar floor, the bodies of Brutes and ODST's were littered around him. His Battle Rifle lay discarded at his feet. Jack removed his helmet and dropped it to the floor. It clattered heavily, the echo bounced round the empty room. It took him a moment to realise he was wounded; blood seeped from a deep wound in his right arm. He couldn't feel the pain though. Jack was fixated on a small dot which had disappeared into the atmosphere of the planet minutes ago. He sighed heavily, he wasn't alone in the room, other wounded men and women populated the hangar, awaiting the arrival of the medic squads. The battle for the hangar had been brutal and had taken its heavy toll on everyone. Jack was broken inside, he knew there was little he could have done but that changed nothing. He'd failed and he knew it. Jack had found Karen, when he joined the fight for the hangar; she was marched aboard the Brute ship along with the other prisoners. Jack had fought hard, maybe that was why he felt all the worse, knowing that his best wasn't good enough. Then again maybe he was being selfish, there were bound to be others who had lost someone. They had all given it their all, but it wasn't enough, the Brutes ship pulled out of the hangar and blasted its way planetside. The Battle for Gun Station Razor was over, but Jack knew that he'd lost.

5. Hammer on an Anvil

Been massively busy lately and got stuck in a slump with no creativeness but I finally got over it and finished this Chapter. If you were reading, enjoy.

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Hammer on an Anvil

Jack sprinted down the corridors of the Titan. He skidded round a corner, nearly bowling over a group of the ship's crewmen. Not stopping to apologise he carried on his ceaseless search. Upon reaching the Command Deck Jack finally slowed to a halt before beginning a brisk walk to the doorway. He saluted to the two door guards and stepped through. He weaved his way briskly through hurried deck officers shouting commands and orders to the bridge crew, no doubt preparing for the landing Jack thought. Jack came upon a huddled group of men poring over a map of what Jack could only assume

was the target zone. They were all pointing or trying to be heard over one another, all except one; Jack recognised the man to be Admiral Kalmann, the man personally put in command of the mission by the late Lord Hood. Who died shortly before the operation began, Jack remembered the enormous ceremony, dedicated to the man who led humanity through its darkest hours.

The other Commanders and Tacticians were so engrossed in the map they did not notice Jack approach the table. He was unsure of how to deal with men this high above him so he waited patiently. It was the Admiral who noticed him first, merely nodding to acknowledge Jack was even there. Jack removed his helmet and rested it under one arm respectfully. He saluted the Admiral.

'Sir, Private Durham reporting, Sir.'

'â€|Private Durham?' The Admiral spoke slowly.

'Yes Sir.' Jack spoke uncertainly.

'I only have a Lieutenant Durham listed.' The Admiral continued calmly.

'Lieutenant?' Jack blurted.

'I granted your promotion on the request of your Sergeant, in his report he spoke of your actions with the highest commendation, now you must have come here for a reason, what was it you wanted?' Jack stood stunned for a moment, then continued.

'Sir, I came with request for a commission to be part of the advance landing forces.' The Admiral seemed to be in thought. He looked up with a concerned look on his face, and then started talking.

'What reason have you behind this request? Do not wish death young man, it is not something to strive towards.' Jack felt a pang of guilt, he'd been without emotion and careless for too long, he had shut out family, friendsâ€|and Karen. But no more, Jack had resolved he would be in the first wave, so the guilt passed and was replaced by annoyance.

'With all due respect Sir, Jack replied, death is what I am hoping to avoid, I am hoping, Sir, to prevent the deaths of members of the 506th ODST Platoon.' Jack's reply seemed to have caught him by surprise. He raised a hand to his chin and stroked it thoughtfully, then dismissed the other officers and put a hand round Jack's shoulder and pulled him into a corner.

'I sense an ulterior motive of sorts son, the Admiral smiled kindly, speak freely, I won't pass judgement.' Jack sighed while gazing at the floor.

'P.F.C. Thompson, Sir, Karen Thompson, Jack replied, sheâ€|she was part of the attack Sir, on Gun Station Razor, but her unit was ambushed, and taken planetside by the Brutes.'

'Well you can hardly hold yourself responsible for-

'That's just it Sir, I can. For, I don't know how many years now Sir, I've dedicated myself to the UNSC, the military, my men, the job, but

I shut out everything else, after what happened on Earth—the deaths, the casualties, I just shut out everything else, emotions, memories, everything.' He looked up at the Admiral.

'Go on.' He said.

'I—I've been a fool Sir. I've been an oblivious fool. She was there for me for these years, but I was too focused on keeping things out that I didn't notice, now, when she needed me, where was I? Too busy trying to give myself some purpose by fighting.' Jack then noticed something, like a weight had been lifted from his shoulders. Sadness and Guilt made way for resolve.

'Sir, Jack continued, I will be in the first wave of the attack, I will save my unit, and I will make up for the mess I've made.'

'Oh? The Admiral raised an eyebrow, and how will you do that?'

'With all due respect Sir, I'll get on a ship down to that planet, even if I have to steal one.' The Admiral seemed amused at that and slapped a hand on Jack's shoulder.

'That won't be necessary; you'll have your commission son.' Jack raised a hand in salute.

'Thank you Sir.' The Admiral turned round to leave while uttering something.

'Give them hell Lieutenant.' Jack saluted again, then turned to leave the room while stating in a raised voice.

'With respect Sir, we shall be the Hammer on an Anvil.'

The Admiral smiled before turning back to his maps.

6. Reign of Fire

Well this took ages to finish. Sorry if you were reading it and waiting. Hope you're not dissatisfied, next chapter the fighting starts again.

Reign of Fire

Jack found himself back in a drop pod, alongside row after row of similar pod docks aboard the Titan. He braced himself for the drop that was to come, this was different to a space-drop, and gravity was a factor this time. Once he hit the atmosphere any number of things could go wrong; the shields could fail and he would burn up, the chute on the pod could open too early and fail, or open too late and he would become a crater. Jack breathed in and out slowly trying to calm his nerves, he'd done drops before, but he had never had the responsibility of a command, albeit a small one, before. On landing he had the task of keeping together a group of twelve men and women he'd never met. A red light flashed above him. Jack just watched the pod go from a red hue to dark, then red then dark; before he knew it he was remembering things, things which had changed his life.

Jack shifted nervously from one foot to another, he adjusted his shirt, checked his jacket, anything to busy himself, today, of all

days, nothing could afford to go wrong. Suddenly a door opened, the echo carried down the long hall, and then she stepped in, the woman he was going to marry. People turned as she walked past them slowly towards Jack and the altar. She glided up the steps, taking her place opposite Jack. The oaths were over before Jack knew it, barely aware of himself as he muttered:

'I do.' Jack's heart was pounding as she did the same. He reached down and lifted the veil from her face, then wrapped his arms round her and pulled her into a long kiss.

Jack jolted suddenly inside the pod, aware that the latches had just unhooked, he braced himself as the pod plummeted. Jack wished that was all he could remember, that one moment, he'd give up all his life to just keep that one memory, but that wasn't all of it.

Jack pulled away from the kiss as he noticed people were muttering about something, everyone was fixated on the sky outside the windows, Jack noticed it too. The sky was full. People bustled outside, Jack followed behind, once past the door he gazed skywards, the sky was packed with all manner of ships and vessels, but none of them were human. Everyone let out a surprised cry as suddenly thousands of lights appeared beneath the ships, then seemed to grow as they got closer. Several streets away one of the lights touched the ground, for a moment nothing happened. Then there was an engulfing white flash that blinded Jack momentarily, he stumbled and fell, then knew no more.

The pod sounded a screeching siren that brought Jack to from his musings again; he had reached the atmosphere of the planet. The pod began to judder violently; Jack merely closed his eyes and remembered.

When Jack opened his eyes again there was carnage everywhere, building were hollowed out husks and cars were burning carcasses of twisted metal. He pulled himself to his feet, slowly gaining his bearings again. Jack looked to the sky, ash and burning ember choked the air. As he looked to the streets his eyes fell upon a sight that haunted his sleep night after night. Jack could only stare in horror at the mass of charred corpses; he turned away only to see they were everywhere, all around him. The Wedding guests, his familyâ€|his loveâ€|. Jack frantically made his way over to his wife; he knelt down and scooped her up in his arms. Jack hoped with all his heart, even though he already knew that he was holding the lifeless form of his love. Jack looked up at the sky just in time to see the unfamiliar ships vanish. It wasn't long before sirens were heard all over, as medics and rescue crews were put to work. In the sky Jack saw Longsword fighters and Pelicans fill the skies. Jack set down the body in his arms and began walking away from the scene. Life had changed; a Reign of Fire had begun.

Something inside Jack changed that day. His resolve was strengthened, and in place of sorrow Jack built up his hate and fury towards the Covenant, to block the hole left by his loss. Jack became aware that the pod had slowed; he assumed the chute had opened and, he hoped, was on his way to the target zone.

Two chapters in one day. Inspiration has finally returned and I'm on a roll. Hopefully this is enough action to satisfy for now, but the real fighting kicks off next chapter. Enjoy what's here so far, and thanks for reading this far.

Trial and Error

Jack was stacked up against the ruins of a wall. Clutching his Battle Rifle to his chest he slowly peered round the side, only to have to take cover again as a cascade of enemy fire slammed into the ground around him. What the hell had happened? Jack thought to himself. His pod had hit the ground perfectly, no problems. But once he left the pod, he had stepped out into utter mayhem. All around him were enemy positions, along with other ODST's from the landing, but he had no idea where his command was. Jack had taken refuge behind a ruined wall and hadn't moved since.

A second barrage hit the wall Jack was sheltering behind causing him to flinch as shards of stone flew everywhere. He swore under his breath as he attempted to find out where he was. To his left he saw a dishevelled group of soldiers trying to form up behind a blown out building. Jack fired a volley to get the closest ODST's attention, the soldier turned towards Jack, then back to the others with him; he waved an arm towards the Brutes pinning down Jack. Several got to their feet and began concentrating fire on the Brutes position; Jack leapt to his feet and picked his way through the carnage that was their drop zone until he reached the soldiers. Jack ducked down in the centre of the building.

'Which outfit are you guys and who's you're CO?' Jack shouted. The nearest soldier turned to him.

'405th, C Squad. CO killed in drop, highest is the Sergeant.' The man gestured to a soldier behind him.

'Right, Jack began, I'm Lieutenant Durham, until I find my squad, you're all with me, got it?'

'Yes Sir.' The man replied. Jack got up and stepped over to the Sergeant. He was firing down on several Brutes with a pistol while attempting to operate his radio.

'Sergeant.' Jack said.

'Yes Sir?' The Sergeant replied looking up at him.

'Does that thing work?'

'Barely, Sir.'

'Good enough, try and get through to another squad, any squad, we need to find out where we are and where we should be, and if possible, try and find the 506th D Squad.'

'Yes Sir.' The Sergeant nodded at Jack and proceeded to operate the radio.

'Good man.' Jack clapped him on the shoulder, and then turned round to look for a good viewpoint where he could try and discern where they were.

Jack leant against a crumbled wall with a window which gave a wide view of the hole they had found themselves in. He tapped a button on his helmet several times until his viewer came into focus, giving him a detailed view of the surrounding area. He reached into one of his belt packs and drew out a map; he pressed it against the wall and tried to match any still standing landmarks. On his map he had marked his drop zone along with where he was supposed to be headed. Best he could tell, he had missed his target by one to two kilometres at least. Jack sighed, if he had missed, his squad could be scattered all over by now. He put the map away again, and reset the viewer in his helmet. Jack knew what he had to do. He would take the C squad with him, to the anti-air bunker he was supposed to hit, and hope to pick up any members of D squad on the way. He made his way back to the group, and called them to him. He slung his rifle over his shoulder, and then knelt down in front of them.

'Right, here's how it goes, you guys are with me, I'm heading to the anti-air bunker to the west of here, on the way I hope to pick up as many of D squad as possible, once we reach the bunker we storm it, take it down, then you will hold the area. Orders will be updated from there, got it?'

'Sir yes Sir!' The soldiers replied.

'Right, move out!' Jack shouted, loading his rifle, discarding the empty magazine. The group made their way out of the building and immediately ran for cover as they came under fire.

'Use cover and manoeuvre as close as possible to their positions, closer you are, the easier the targets they are!' Jack counted roughly six Brutes up ahead, he had almost fifteen, but with fighting like this he knew there would be casualties.

'Sir!' Someone called. Jack looked round and saw the Sergeant signalling him. Jack picked his way over to him.

'What is it?' Jack asked.

'Its B squad, 405th, they're asking why we aren't with them.'

'Are you supposed to be?' Jack asked exasperated.

'We don't know, the CO died before he even gave us orders.'

'Damn it! Damn fools, God rest him.' Jack spat.

'What do we do Sir?' The Sergeant asked. Jack thought quickly.

'Ok, what's your name Sergeant?'

'Patterson Sir.'

'Ok, Patterson, assemble ten of the men and send them to B squad, you and then whoever's left is with me.'

'Right Sir.' Patterson stepped past Jack. Jack watched as the soldiers made their way carefully back to the building and out of sight.

'Patterson, keep on that radio and try and contact 506th D squad or anyone who knows where they are.'

'Yes sir.'

'Right, Jack addressed the soldiers with him, we don't have time for this, we're going to take this position, and we're going to take the bunker today, with or without my damn squad. You get me marines!'

'Sir yes Sir!' They cried in unison.

Jack stood up and followed by the remnants of C squad, charged the Brutes position.

Trial and error, that's all it is, Jack thought to himself, trial and error.

End
file.